

with Jerry Chizek, the homestead exemption is too low; ought to be higher. And, frankly, I've got to agree with Senator Lamb that, in fact, property taxes operate very harshly against our farms. They do. This is an industry that does not control its own pricing, we know is an economic downturn, different from all of the rest of the economy. They do not share in the rise of the economy. They only rise with the federal budget. The farm economy does well when the federal government allows it to do well but not according to the pricing or market mechanisms that govern the rest of the economy. And, frankly, we have done some things that have made that situation more difficult for farmers. We gulped down bitter medicine last year in LB 361 and that has implications for farmers. Frankly, as we move LB 249 across the board, there will, over time, perhaps be more difficult tax burdens for farmers in LB 249. We have done that in a couple of different places. I would not want to throw out that key to agreement that we found last year which is that you can't do property tax relief for one and only one sector of Nebraska at a time. This is not an area in which we can have winners and losers. This is an area in which we must have winners and winners. And, in that sense, we made progress on property tax relief last year because, after butting our heads against each other for years, we agreed to hold hands and move forward by making sure that the pot was divided with some equity. I can sure understand why Jerry would want to come to the well right now and say, it's too little, let's improve ourselves, let's do more, and I agree with that notion. But let us not throw away the key to action in this area. And, frankly, Senator Wesely raised a good point. Our initiative last year failed to bring real property tax relief because of the unexpected rise in local spending. I agree with Senator Wesely on that point. On the other hand, there is nothing in 747 that ensures that that will happen across the state again, and, in fact, there won't be additional increases in local spending. In other words, the failure that Senator Wesely identified, which I think is absolutely accurate, and laid at our feet from last year's LB 84, remains at our feet no matter what we do with 747. The key to that failure and solving that problem doesn't lie in this bill, it lies elsewhere in the lid proposals contained in other measures. If I had to choose for myself a course of action today, it would be this, it would be to send 747 to E & R and to bracket 747 on E & R for a period of time certain, sufficient to have the public hearing and the committee disposal of the issue of a more across-the-board kind of real property tax relief and let the issues be joined at that point. Yes, I suppose a